

Message Text

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SUBJECT: HIGH-LEVEL MILITARY BRIEFING ON RESULTS OF ARRESTS OF
COMMUNIST PARTY FIGURES

REF: MONTEVIDEO 4406

1. SUMMARY. URUGUAY'S MOST SENIOR OFFICIALS, CIVILIAN AND MILITARY, PLUS A FEW SELECTED GUESTS, WERE BRIEFED EARLY ON DECEMBER 29 ON THE RESULTS OF RECENT ARRESTS OF COMMUNIST PARTY FIGURES. THE PRESENTATION, WHICH INCLUDED A SHOWING OF A LARGE QUANTITY OF WEAPONS TAKEN FROM PARTY CACHES, FOLLOWED SEVERAL DAYS OF RELEASES OF SIMILAR INFORMATION TO THE MEDIA. STRESS WAS PLACED ON SOVIET SUPPORT FOR THE URUGUAYAN PARTY, LEADING TO CONJECTURE THAT THE GOU MAY BE PREPARING PUBLIC OPINION FOR A BREAK IN RELATIONS WITH THE USSR. A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR CAMPAIGN WAS MOUNTED IN LATE 1973 WHEN THE PARTY WAS OUTLAWED AND THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR REPRIMANDED. ON THAT OCCASION, TOO, THERE WERE RUMORS OF A POSSIBLE DIPLOMATIC BREAK, BUT IT DID NOT MATERIALIZE. WE DO NOT KNOW PRECISELY HOW FAR THE GOU INTENDS TO GO THIS TIME.

2. PRESIDENT BORDABERRY, THE CABINET, SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS, MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE, OTHER SENIOR CIVILIAN AUTHORITIES,
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DIPLOMATS FROM THE SOUTHERN CONE, BRAZIL AND THE U.S. (AMERICAN

AMBASSADOR DID NOT ATTEND, HOWEVER), FOREIGN MILITARY ATTACHES AND A FEW PRESS PEOPLE ATTENDED AN "INFORMATIVE CONFERENCE" ON THE RESULTS OF RECENT ARRESTS OF COMMUNIST PARTY (PCU) FIGURES). THE CONFERENCE, CALLED OVER THE WEEKEND BY THE ARMED FORCES CINCS, TOOK PLACE AT 0800 ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 29. IT WAS RUN BY OCOA, THE MILITARY'S ANTI-SUBVERSIVE ARM.

3. IN AN HOUR-LONG ORAL PRESENTATION, THE OCOA REPRESENTATIVE DETAILED PCU STRUCTURE, AS DESCRIBED BY DETAINED PARTY PEOPLE, INCLUDING FIRST SECRETARY JOSE MASSERA AND PROPAGANDA SECRETARY VLADIMIR TURIANSKY, WHO ALSO WORKED WITH THE PARTY'S LABOR ARM, THE CNT. INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM THESE PEOPLE LED TO THE UNCOVERING OF A PARTY "MILITARY APPARATUS" WHICH CONSISTED OF AN "EJERCITO POPULAR" ORGANIZED IN GROUPS. WRITTEN MATERIAL HANDED OUT AT THE MEETING (BEING POUCHED TO ARA/APU) INDICATED THAT THE ARMED GROUP INCLUDED 300-400 MEN BUT THE OCOA SPEAKER ANNOUNCED THAT THEY NOW HAD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE NUMBER MAY BE AS HIGH AS 2500.

4. THE SOVIET UNION CAME UP FOR FREQUENT MENTION. OUTLINING PCU FINANCES, THE SPEAKER SAID THAT MOST OF THE PARTY'S INCOME IS FROM THE SOVIET UNION. THE HEAD OF THE MILITARY APPARATUS AND ITS PRODUCTION CHIEF HAD BEEN TRAINED IN THE USSR. THE DISCOURSE CLOSED WITH A STATEMENT THAT THE PCU, WHICH HAS BEEN PLOTTING AGAINST NATIONAL SECURITY, IS THE MOST POWERFUL THREAT FACING THE NATION BECAUSE OF ITS BACKING FROM THE SOVIET UNION.

5. FOLLOWING THE ORAL PRESENTATION THE INVITEES VIEWED A VAST COLLECTION OF ARMS, INCLUDING A QUANTITY OF US M16S, SOME MORTARS MADE LOCALLY, ROCKET LAUNCHERS AND GRENADES ALSO OF LOCAL ORIGIN AND AN ASSORTMENT OF SMALL ARMS. ALSO SHOWN WERE HOMEMADE TELEPHONE SWITCHBOARDS AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES TAKEN FROM THE PARTY. FINALLY, THERE WERE MOUNTED ON PANELS, PICTURES OF TWO SMALL BOATS, A LIGHT PLANE, SAFEHOUSES, A PEOPLES' PRISON AND PLACES USED FOR WEAPONS CACHES BY THE PCU.

6. THE DATT WILL OBTAIN THE SERIAL NUMBERS ON THE M16S AND ATTEMPT TO TRACE THEIR ORIGIN. THE OCOA SPEAKER TOLD THE GROUP THAT THEY ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN CAPTURED IN VIET NAM AS SEVERAL HAD STOCKS WHICH HAD BEEN HIT BY SMALL ARMS FIRE AND IT IS ASSUMED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT THEY HAD BEEN USED IN COMBAT. THEY SUBSEQUENTLY APPEAR IN IN URUGUAY. THE M16 IS NOT IN THE INVENTORY OF THE URUGUAYAN ARMED FORCES.

7. WE DO NOT KNOW WHY THIS SESSION WAS CALLED WITH SUCH URGENCY OVER A HOLIDAY WEEKEND, PARTICULARLY WHEN MUCH OF WHAT WAS SAID AND SHOWN HAD BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE PRESS THE LAST FEW DAYS. THE CAMPAIGN MAY BE A PRELUDE TO A RUPTURE IN RELATIONS WITH THE SOV-

IETS OR A LESS DRASTIC MOVE AGAINST THE SOVIET EMBASSY. IT IS
GENERALLY BELIEVED THAT THE SOVIET EMBASSY HAS BEEN DIRECTLY
INVOLVED WITH THE PARTY AND THAT DETAINED PARTY PEOPLE SO TOLD
THEIR CAPTORS. THE SOVIET PRESS ATTACHE IS BEING SINGLED OUT IN
THE PRESS CIRCLED AS PARTICULARLY INVOLVED. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER
A BREAK IS IN THE MILL. A PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN ALSO TOOK
PLACE IN LATE 1973 WHEN THE PARTY WAS OUTLAWED. A POSSIBLE RUPTURE
WITH THE USSR WAS RUMORED THEN, TOO, BUT DID NOT OCCUR.
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